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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 000307

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [KMPI](#) [KU](#)  
SUBJECT: KUWAIT CABINET OFFERS ITS RESIGNATION

REF: A. KUWAIT 0090

[1](#)B. 07 KUWAIT 1760

Classified By: CDA Alan G. Misenheimer for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: On March 17, the entire cabinet of the Government of Kuwait offered its resignation to PM Shaykh Nasser Al Sabah, citing a lack of cooperation from MPs that has "undermined national unity and security." The surprise move comes after many months of head-butting between cabinet and Parliament, resulting in stalled legislation, cabinet reshuffles, and the resignation of five government ministers within the past year. If the PM accepts the mass resignation, it must then also be accepted by the Amir (currently vacationing in Morocco). The Amir's options include straightforward acceptance of the resignations and appointment of a new cabinet; but he could also use this "crisis" as justification for dissolving Parliament and calling for new elections within 60 days. Indeed, this unprecedented political drama, which has certainly been mapped out by the ruling family, may be a pretext for dissolving Parliament. These developments may drag on for days or weeks, but will not likely impact the overall U.S.-Kuwaiti bilateral relationship. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) On March 17, the entire cabinet of the Government of Kuwait (GOK) offered its resignation (text in para. 5) to Prime Minister Shaykh Nasser Mohammed Al-Ahmed Al Sabah. The surprise move comes after months of GOK conflict with Parliament over a long list of issues large and small, resulting in stalled legislation, cabinet reshuffles, and the resignation of five government ministers (ref B). Most recently, Education Minister Nouriyah Al-Sabeeh narrowly escaped a no confidence vote in exchange for a now controversial GOK pledge to enforce existing gender segregation legislation in public and private universities (ref A). The previous Ministers of Islamic Affairs, Finance, Health, Oil and Information have all succumbed to parliamentary "grillings" (interpellations) or threats of grillings since January 2007.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: This unprecedented political drama - clearly a coordinated plan orchestrated by the Al Sabah - is all the more striking because it is unfolding while the Amir is abroad. The PM has not yet announced a decision to accept the cabinet's resignations, and he will probably not take any action while Amir Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al Sabah remains on vacation in Morocco. Crown Prince Nawaf, as acting Head of State, has the statutory authority to accept the resignations and appoint a new government, but is unlikely to act in the Amir's absence.

[1](#)4. (C) The ruling family now has a range of options, which boil down to three primary scenarios: a) refuse the

resignations and return to the dysfunctional status quo; b) accept the resignations and appoint a new cabinet; or c) accept the resignations and dissolve Parliament as well. If the Amir opts for scenario three (and indeed the whole scenario may be an elaborate pretext for dissolving Parliament), he has the option of dissolving Parliament constitutionally and calling for new elections within sixty days, or dissolving Parliament "unconstitutionally" and ruling by decree for some extended period. Regardless of the outcome, these developments will likely have no significant impact on Kuwait's foreign policy or the overall U.S.-Kuwaiti bilateral relationship. End comment.

15. (U) The Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) reproduced the text of Defense Minister/First Deputy PM Shakyh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al Sabah's resignation letter to PM Nasser Al Sabah, which reads as follows:

Begin text

"It was a great honor to be entrusted by His Highness the Amir to the ministerial posts in order to serve our dear homeland. However, we faced regrettable obstacles, notably the tense relationship between the legislative and executive authorities, the deviation of the concept of parliamentary representation, the infringement on the national unity and the violation of guidelines outlined by the constitution and the internal statutes of the National Assembly. The MPs rebuffed the government call for cooperation and achievement of the aspirations of the citizens, and tended to practices that could undermine our national unity and security.

Some MPs tended to transgress the constitutional rules and parliamentary norms with a view to escalating the tension with the government and meddle in the affairs of ministers.

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Such practices widened the gap between the government and the parliament and shrank the chances of positive cooperation between the two authorities. The government is no longer able to discharge its duties and responsibilities and push forward the desired development, thus fueling the feelings of frustration and resentment among the citizens. For the above reasons, and in light of the general atmosphere in the region that necessitates effective cooperation, my colleagues and I deemed it necessary to tender our resignation to your highness. We expect your highness to take as usual the wise decision to serve the higher interests of the nation. We pray for God to help you do good to our dear homeland under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince."

End text.

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Misenheimer